KUGUTSU

VOLUME 01 CHAPTER_01

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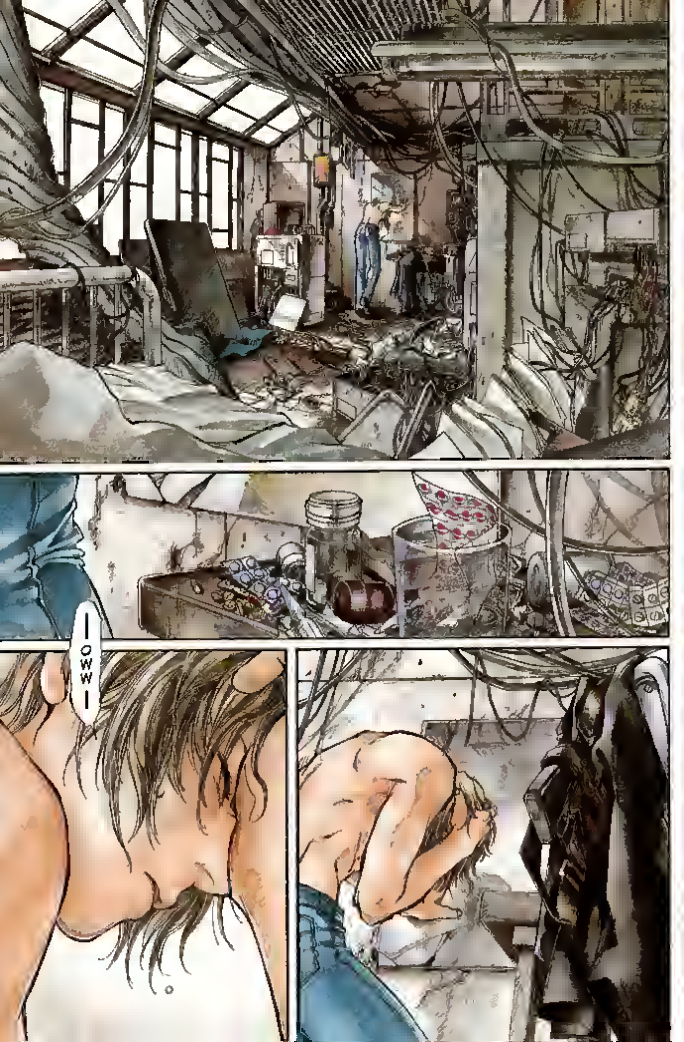
C O N T E N T S

ACT.1_003

ACT.2_071

ACT.3_139

HURIMUKEBA SHIAWASE_205


OWW!

act.1

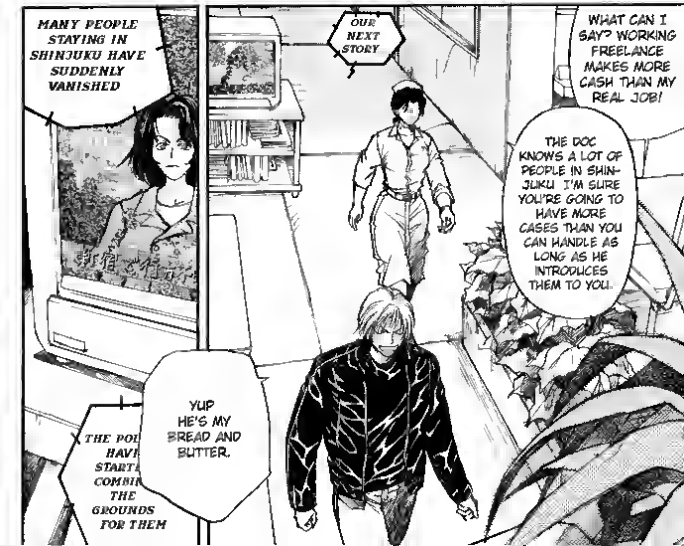
RIGHT
..
FRONT
.
RIGHT
..
LEFT
..

.....
THE EXIT!
WHO...
TWO OF THEM!
OUT-
ARE YOU?

"DOLLS!"
I'M SUCH AN IDIOT!
ハァ…

Cash in
NO THANKS.
HEY, PHIL, THERE'S SOME GOOD STUFF OVER HERE!

CAN'T I COME VISIT THE SICK? BE MORE CIVIL, WILL YA?
HEY, IS THAT FELLA AROUND?
Knock Knock
OH, THE ELEC-TRI-CIAN!
Reception
ARE YOU HERE TO SEE HIM ABOUT ANOTHER CASE?
THE DOC'S GOT A VISITOR AT THE MOMENT...
WEL-COME. IS THIS YOUR FIRST TIME HERE?


MANY PEOPLE STAYING IN SHINJUKU HAVE SUDDENLY VANISHED
OUR NEXT STORY
WHAT CAN I SAY? WORKING FREELANCE MAKES MORE CASH THAN MY REAL JOB!
THE DOC KNOWS A LOT OF PEOPLE IN SHIN-JUKU. I'M SURE YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE MORE CASES THAN YOU CAN HANDLE AS LONG AS HE INTRODUCES THEM TO YOU.
YUP HE'S MY BREAD AND BUTTER.
THE POL HAVE START COMBI THE GROUNDS FOR THEM

HEY, WEI!
MR. OKADA, THIS IS THE INVESTIGATOR THAT I WAS TELLING YOU ABOUT.
HELLO, PLEASED TO MEET YOU.
Jimo Okada
HERE IS MY BUSINESS CARD
MR. OKADA'S A MEMBER OF THE PATHOLOGICAL RESEARCH CENTRE
WE OFTEN WORK TOGETHER.
OH...?
I'D LIKE TO ASK FOR YOUR HELP FINDING MY SISTER.
WHAT'D YOU WANT ME TO DO?

I'M A FREELANCE RESEARCHER, AND SELDOM HAVE TIME TO SPEND WITH MY SISTER. SHE ISN'T VERY UNDERSTANDING TOWARDS MY CIRCUMSTANCES.
SHE'S ALSO GOT A HABIT OF LYING, AND SHE'S BEEN RUNNING AWAY FROM HOME OF LATE.
I'M REALLY VERY DISAPPOINTED IN HER.
BUT I'M STILL HER BROTHER, AND I CAN'T BEAR THE THOUGHT OF HER WANDERING IN THE STREETS ALL ALONE.
I'VE HEARD A LOT OF PEOPLE HAVE DISAPPEARED OF LATE!
Hey.
It's probably useless searching.
UGGHHH! THIS IS A PHOTO OF MY SISTER!
HER NAME'S NIMIYA.
WHAT A SCARY EXPRESSION.
Like she's about to shoot lasers from her eyes.
SHE'S ABOUT 163CM* TALL, AND SHE TURNED 15 THIS YEAR.

SHE'S GOT VERY LOVELY EYES
COULD I ASK YOU TO STEP OUTSIDE FOR A MOMENT, MR. OKADA?
HMM...
I'LL DO MY BEST!
BUT OF COURSE
I'LL BE COUNTING ON YOU...
SHINJUKU IS HUGE! WHERE SHOULD I START
FOR ALL I KNOW, SHE'S BEEN SOLD INTO THE HUMAN TRADE BY NOW!
THAT'S WHY MR. OKADA HOPES TO HAVE HER FOUND SOON...
?

.....
THERE'S NOTHING THERE!
ANOTHER FLASH-BACK?
DIDN'T I TELL YOU TO QUIT TAKING DRUGS?
I QUIT AGES AGO
BUT THERE'S STILL THE AFTER EFFECTS.
SOMETIMES JUNKIES CAN EVEN HALLUCI-NATE FROM TAKING COLD MEDI-CINE.
WELL, YOU REAP WHAT YOU SOW.

BUT TO SEE THINGS THAT OTHERS CAN'T...
MIGHT BE A REALLY FUN EXPERIENCE AS WELL!
THAT'S JUST SICK
...
AH! ELECTRICIAN!
SO?
WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE SHE LEFT? DO YOU HAVE ANY CLUES?
HMM— SHE MOVED IN WITH ME AFTER OUR MOTHER DIED—
I DON'T THINK SHE HAD MANY FRIENDS
I GUESS I'LL HAVE TO GO CHECK OUT YOUR SISTER'S ROOM FOR CLUES

THERE'S A HUGE AGE GAP BETWEEN US, AND I MOVED OUT WHEN SHE WAS STILL VERY YOUNG
I ALMOST COULDN'T RECOGNISE HER WHEN I SAW HER!
BUT SHE MIGHT HAVE CHANGED A LOT...
IT'S NOT BAD TO HAVE A PRETTY YOUNGER SISTER HOW ABOUT YOU? ANY SIBLINGS?
ERM...
NOPE
HM?
SHE'S GOT REALLY NICE HAIR!
I'M AN ONLY CHILD
OH!
LOOK AT THAT GIRL OVER THERE!
grab
turn
LET'S GO TALK TO THEM!
HUH?
What're you talking about?
THERE ARE SO MANY PEOPLE OUT THERE BUT IT'S HARD TO FIND SOMEONE WHO LOOKS PERFECT FROM HEAD TO TOE!
HOLD IT! MR. OKADA!
AH! THE ONE NEXT TO HER HAS A VERY SEXY NECK!

I DISSECT CORPSES ...
AND DETERMINE THE CAUSE OF DEATH.
THAT'S RIGHT! WE WERE TALKING ABOUT NIMIYA, WEREN'T WE?
THIS ISN'T THE TIME TO BE SKIRT CHASING. ISN'T IT MORE IMPORTANT TO FIND YOUR SISTER?
SHE WAS VERY CUTE AS A KID. I'LL SHOW YOU SOME OF HER CHILDHOOD PHOTOS LATER ON!
Quit imagining about her
YOU'RE A MEMBER OF THE PATHOLOGICAL RESEARCH CENTRE, AREN'T YOU? WHAT DO YOU NORMALLY DO?
UMM... YEAH, RIGHT!
IF HE COMES ACROSS AN UNIDENTIFIED CORPSE, HE'LL BRING THE SKIN BACK HOME...
HE SHOWED ME HIS COLLECTION NOT TOO LONG AGO!
I'VE GOT A FRIEND WHO'S GOT A PRETTY SICK MIND.
THE CORPSES ARE NORMALLY DELIVERED LATE AT NIGHT, SO I START THE AUTOPSY WITH ANOTHER REGULATION OFFICER THE NEXT DAY.
IF IT'S HOT THE NEXT DAY OR IF THE BODY HAS BEGUN TO ROT, THE STENCH IS HORRIBLE.
Three showers a day won't get rid of it!
Here we go.
BUT IF I'M LUCKY, I'LL COME ACROSS A GOOD-LOOKING CORPSE.
DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE INTO STUFF LIKE THAT TOO?
NOPE!
I'VE GOT SAMPLES OF RARE ANIMALS FROM THE MEDICAL CENTRE AT MY PLACE!
Ehehe

.....
slas slas slas slas
slas slas slas
!
TURN
?
.....
WAS I BEING PARA-NOID —?

I'M NOT LYING YOU! REALLY HAVE WONDERFUL LEGS!
What!?
HUH
MR. OKADA!
HERE'S MY CARD. KEEP IN TOUCH!
HURRY UP AND LEAD THE WAY!
Sure
AAAAA!
thud
clatter
thunk
IS THIS A LIBRARY OR SOMETHING? WHERE AM I SUPPOSED TO BEGIN?
Every room is filled with books! Isn't this a little over the top?
ERM... SORRY
BUT COULD YOU KEEP THE BOOKS IN ORDER? OTHERWISE I'M NOT GOING TO KNOW WHERE TO FIND MY THINGS
PLEASE PUT EVERYTHING BACK INTO ITS ORIGINAL PLACE.
Huh?
I'LL GO MAKE SOME TE...

I'M SO WORRIED ABOUT HER!
BUT NOT ONLY DOES SHE NOT HAVE ANY PERSONAL ITEMS, SHE DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE MUCH CLOTHING EITHER...
A FIFTEEN-YEAR-OLD RUNAWAY SHOULD LEAVE A LOT OF CLUES BEHIND
THIS MIGHT SOUND A LITTLE STRANGE, BUT HAVE YOU RUN INTO ANYTHING ODD OF LATE?
NOT AT ALL WHY?
MAYBE I'M JUST BEING PARANOID
I KEEP FEELING LIKE THERE IS SOMEONE FOLLOWING US... YOU REALLY HAVEN'T NOTICED ANYTHING?
SURE. THANKS.
NOPE
WOULD YOU LIKE SOME MORE TE
EH?

WHAT'S THAT PLACE OVER THERE USED FOR?
OH, YOU MEAN THAT THING!
THAT'S WHERE I KEEP MY SAMPLES.
WOULD YOU LIKE TO TAKE A LOOK? THERE'S A ONE-EYED CHILD FROM 50 YEARS AGO THERE AND
QUITE A FEW SAMPLES OF SIAMESE TWINS!
NO THANKS I'M FINE
I'M SORRY...
AH, HOT!
SHAT
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. I'M GLAD YOU AREN'T HURT...

GRAB
!?
WHAT'S WRONG?
—?
YOU HAVE REALLY NICE HANDS!
HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED ABOUT THAT?
WHY IS IT THAT THOUGH THE FUNCTION OF CERTAIN BODY PARTS IS IDENTICAL...
THE SHAPE AND APPEARANCE OF THAT BODY PART VARIES WITH INDIVIDUALS?
WHAT DO YOU THINK?

EGG PARTS THAT HAVE EVOLVED OVER SO MANY YEARS TO BECOME WHAT THEY ARE TODAY
AND YET THEY ARE ABLE TO EXHIBIT THIS FLAWLESS HUMAN BEAUTY
ER
I'M NOT THAT SMART. SO I'VE NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT THAT...
I THINK I'VE FOUND ALL THE CLUES LYING AROUND.
SO I THINK I'LL HEAD ON OUT NOW
OH?
smile
BYE!
I'LL BE COUNTING ON YOUR HELP TO FIND MY SISTER!
ARE ALL RESEARCHERS THIS CREEPY?

!
.....
ARE YOU LOOKING FOR MR. OKIDA FOR SOME REASON?
!?

SH
WHY?
GRAB
HEY YOU!
GET BACK
HERE!
!?

WHAT WAS THAT?
!!
A FLASH-BACK...?

.....
SNAP
AAAAA!
!
HEY! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
Let go...
Stop...

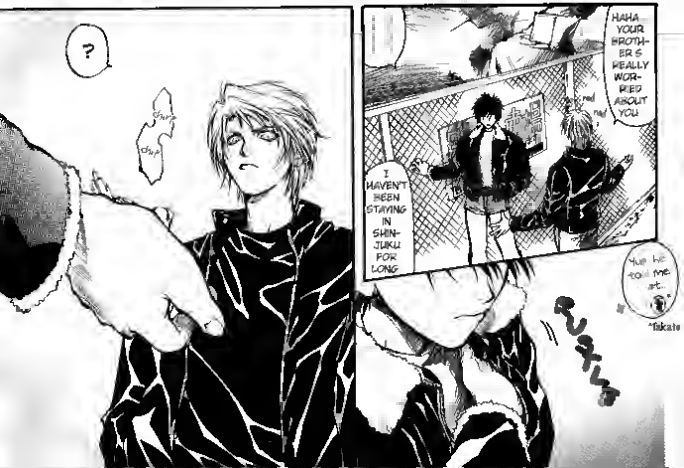
SEE WHAT?
STAY AWAY!
YOU'VE BEEN USING, HUH?
I'M NOT ON ANY-THING! CAN'T YOU SEE IT?
COME ON, BACK TO THE STA-TION WITH ME!
...!?
COME ON!
!?
OOF!?

LET GO ALREADY!
JUST WHO ARE YOU?
YOU SAW THEM, RIGHT?
MR. OKADA'S SISTER...?
BUT...
IT SEEMS LIKE!
HEY!
I'M TALKING TO YOU!

SHE HAS A HABIT OF LYING.
.....
CAN YOU SEE THOSE THINGS?
THOSE THINGS?
THINK CAREFULLY! THOSE MUST HAVE BEEN FLASHBACKS!
He's trying to look confident
HELLO! YOU MUST BE LITTLE NIMIYA!
THIS KID MUST BE TRYING TO DISCOVER MY WEAKNESS SO SHE CAN HAVE A GOOD LAUGH!
PO
INT
THANKS FOR YOUR HELP BACK THERE!
I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU! WE FINALLY MEET!
Do you need to see a doctor
YOU MENTAL OR SOMETHING?
cough

DON'T WORRY. I'M NOT A PSYCHOPATH OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT. MY MAIN JOB'S AN ELECTRICIAN, BUT I'M ALSO A PART-TIME INVESTIGATOR. EVERYONE JUST CALLS ME THE ELECTRICIAN. BUT MY NAME'S REALLY NORIKI TAKATO. YOU CAN CALL ME NORI! ♡
I DIDN'T ASK YOU ANY OF THAT!
blu
Kiss
Kiss
SO THAT PSYCHO ASKED YOU TO BRING HIS SISTER BACK IN?
Hmph!
HE'S REALLY SOMETHING
IT'S NOT LIKE YOU'VE GOT TO STAY WITH HIM, BUT YOU SHOULD REALLY GO SAY HI TO YOUR BROTHER ONCE IN A WHILE. THERE'S NO NEED FOR ANYTHING THIS DRASTIC IS THERE?
WOULDN'T IT BE BETTER TO JUST SIT DOWN AND TALK IT OUT?
DO YOU REALLY THINK WE'RE SIBLINGS?

I WAS ...
HIS PRISONER!


HAHA... YOUR BROTHER'S REALLY WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
I HAVEN'T BEEN STAYING IN SHINJUKU FOR LONG.
*HE TOOK THE BAIT.
*Takato
?

"FIND THE DOLL MAKER...
AND TAKE THE DOLL!"
flap flap
BREAK

KUGUTSU

Akira TAKAHASHI

傀儡 I

高橋一明

KUGUTSU

KG-5

傀儡—KUGUTSU—【第一巻】高橋明

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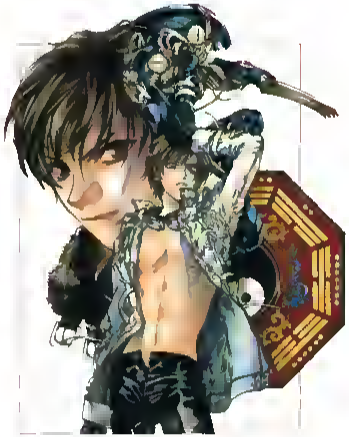
KUGUTSU
AKIRA TAKAHASHI



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KUGUTSU

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THE SPIRIT TOLD ME TO
SO I CAME TO SHIN-JUKU
TO SEARCH FOR THE DOLL MAKER
I THOUGHT THAT PSYCHO WAS THE DOLL MAKER, SO I TRIED TO GET CLOSE TO HIM
I NEVER EXPECTED HIM TO LOCK ME UP
Parking Lot
THAT WAS A MES-SENGER SPIRIT.
I MAN-AGED TO ESCAPE,
BUT THERE ARE OTHERS WHO ARE ALSO AFTER THE DOLL MAKER!
I CAN'T SEE THEM, BUT I KNOW THEY'RE AROUND HERE!
THEY'RE WHAT YOU SAW EARLIER!

JUST WHAT IS THIS "DOLL MAKER" ANYWAY?
.....
I DON'T KNOW.
GRGH!
HOW DARE YOU TRICK ME!
COME WITH ME TO YOUR BROTHER'S!
NO WAY!
gr
OW!
CK.
SORRY, ELEC-TRI-CIAN!
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!
burn
!
.....
BYE!

THE "DOLL MAKER"
"DOLLS"
"MESSENGER SPIRIT"
...
roll
WHAT THE HECK IS GOING ON!
CAN YOU SEE THOSE THINGS?
"SHE'S GOT A HABIT OF LYING."
"YOU..."
.....

creak
"I HAVE REALLY NICE HANDS!"
OKADA, HMM...
!
I PROBABLY SHOULD HAVE CALLED IN ADVANCE...
turn
WASN'T THAT THE GIRL THAT OKADA WAS TRYING TO HIT ON?

DING
DON
FOR-GET IT!
silent
OH, HI!
SORRY FOR THE WAIT. IS ANYTHING WRONG?
SORRY FOR DIS-TURBING YOU,
BUT THERE'S SOME-THING THAT I'D LIKE TO ASK
!
WHERE ARE THE GIRL'S SHOES?

EH?
I THINK IT'S BETTER TO TALK INSIDE!
I'M SORRY, BUT I'M GOING OUT SOON...
.....
WASN'T THERE A GIRL WHO CAME IN EARLIER?
GOING OUT? THEN WHAT ABOUT YOUR GUEST?
.....
IS SHE IN THAT BUILDING?
I'VE ALREADY MET YOUR "SISTER".
BUT SHE SAYS SHE WAS HELD CAPTIVE HERE

YOUR JOB WAS TO FIND HER. WHY'D YOU HAVE TO ASK SUCH SILLY QUESTIONS?
BUT THIS WORKS OUT FINE TOO. I GET TWO BODY PARTS IN ONE DAY.
CRASH
DRAG
IF WHAT YOU SAID WAS TRUE
HM...
THEN THAT BRAT IS AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE
DRAG
DRAG

.....
IN THIS DI-REC-TION...
WHO
!
DAMN...
ARE THEY FINALLY GOING TO MAKE THEIR MOVE?
CRASH
!?
DID THE WIND DO IT?
!

DAMN
shiver
WELL NOW,
YOU'VE FI-NALLY COME
!
SHO
CK
...
THEY HAVEN'T STRUCK YET.
IT'S VERY DANGEROUS HERE, SO YOU'D BEST LEAVE WHILE YOU STILL CAN!
ARE YOU BACK AT LAST?

YOU'VE ALREADY BEEN THE THINGS IN THERE...
AND IT'S ALMOST COMPLETE NOW!
SO...
THEY'RE LOOKING FOR YOU!!
YOU'RE IN DANGER!
THERE YOU GO WITH THAT AGAIN...
DON'T WORRY, IT'S FINE
GIVE ME THOSE BEAUTIFUL EYES OF YOURS!
PRESS
!?
sfx: crash

CRASH
SHIT, THEY'RE HERE!
sfx BUMP

OW
!!
WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?
!!
creak...

DAMN!
SLAM
"THE DOLL MAKER"
WHAT...
WHAT THE HELL IS THIS!?

sfx: thump thump thump
UGH
THEY'RE TOYING WITH ME!
WHERE ARE THEY?
THEIR BODIES
HEY!
splash
splash
splash
splash
splash
splash
sfx: splash
sfx: splash
WHAT'S GOING ON? I DON'T SEE ANY-THING!

HUH?!
Thud
WHAT'S OVER THERE!?
IDIOT! STAY HERE!
OKADA!!!
splash
ARRGGHHH!
Shu-ram
CHOKE
!!
GRGH!
WHOOSH

Choke
Choke
Choke
Sfx crack
Sfx crack
Sfx crack
DAMN... IT...!
YOU WANT A PIECE OF ME?!
Sfx bang

!?
WHOOSH
SLAM
SLAM
SLAM
SLAM
SLAM
DOLL MAKER
DOLL MAKER
DOLL MAKER
DOLL MAKER
FIND HIM!
NOT HIM!
WHERE IS HE?
DOLLS!

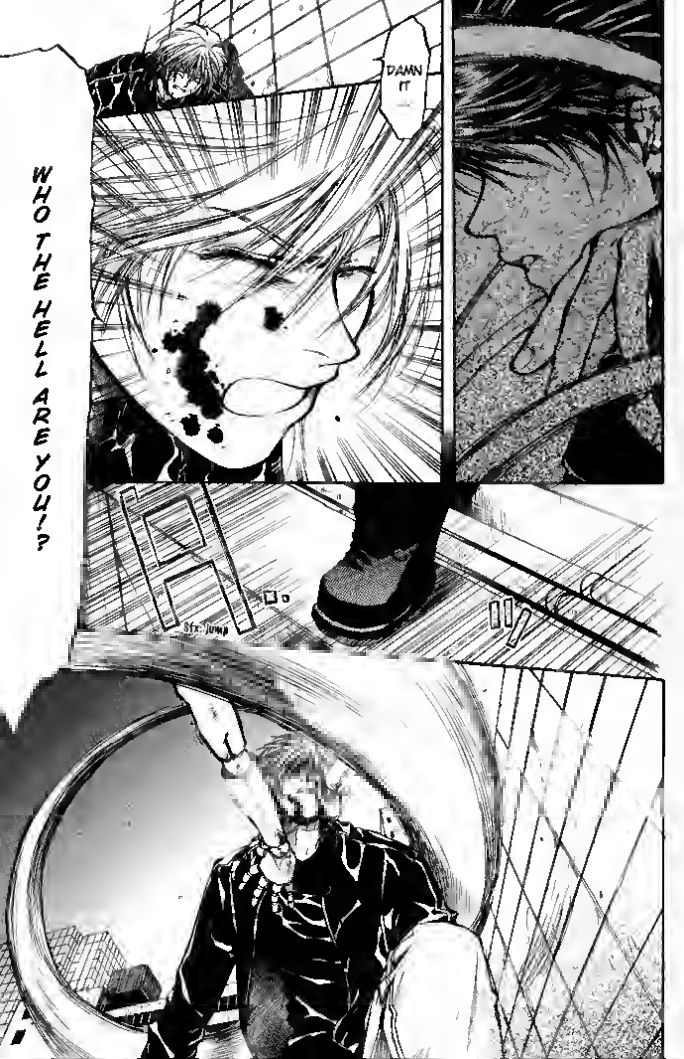
NOT HIM!
Str thud
...OKADA?
HE'S NOT THE DOLL MAKER!
ARE YOU HIS FRIEND?
TAKE ME TO THE DOLL MAKER!
AND THE DOLLS

DOLL MAKER, DOLLS ...
I'VE GOT NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT!!
BANG BANG
BANG
CRACK
CRACK
HA!
HA HA HA!
DAMN

THE EXIT!
scr
ape
!!
skk rahh
!!
TWO OF THEM!?
A FLASH-BACK!?
WHY'S THIS HAP-PENING NOW!?

Sfx: thud
I MUST BE DREAMING
THERE'S NO WAY THIS CAN BE REAL!
RUSH
Sfx: thud
!!
Sfx: slam
URGH!

HAHAHA
...
PANT
COUGH
WILL YOU GIVE IT A REST ALREADY?
I DON'T WANT TO SEE THIS!
HA
WHO ARE YOU?
HAHA!


DAMN IT
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU!?
Shonen Jump

!!
HELLO!
WE MEET AGAIN!
THERE AGAIN THE SAME FACE!

IDIOT!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN THE MIDDLE OF THAT!?
clash
Sfx
DAMN!
DAMN IT ...
Sfx bam bam

HMPH!
CRAP!
GLINK
LOOKS LIKE OKADA WASN'T THE DOLL MAKER
SMILE
GUNS ARE USE-LESS AGAINST THAT THING!
RUN NIMIYA!
HA HA HA!
I WAS RIGHT!
YOU CAN SEE THEM!

IF I HAD KNOWN, I WOULDN'T HAVE TAKEN SO MANY DRUGS. THEN MY MIND WOULDN'T BE SO MESSED UP!
HMPF!
YEAH, I SEE THEM!
THESE AREN'T LIKE A NORMAL FLASHBACK, CRAP!
WATCH OUT!
Six slam
Six slam
BUT
THINGS ARE EASIER NOW THAT YOU'RE HERE!

EVEN THOUGH I CAN'T SEE A THING
HEY, WHAT ARE YOU...!
I HAVE THE POWER TO DESTROY EVERYTHING!

WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR!
WHERE'S THE ENEMY COMING FROM!?
...!
IT'S JUST LIKE THAT GUY FROM MY HOME (NATION)
IN FRONT OF YOU!
clatter
clatter
clatter
YOU TRYING TO KILL ME!?

SHUT UP!
I CAN'T SEE A THING, SO I'M GOING TO MESS UP!
WHAT IS THAT THING!?
SP
I
T

DAMN IT!
LISTEN UP, NIMIYA!
!!
Flash
HE'S ON MY LEFT!
Str. SLAM
!!!

!!
DID I GET HIM!?
PEST
Sfx SLAM
PEST
DLF
DAMN!
WHERE IS IT NOW!?
PART OF IT'S STILL MOVING
DIDN'T WE KILL IT?

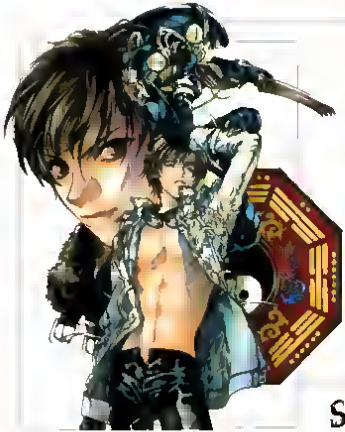
IT'S TOO LATE!
UP AND LEFT ...
!
DAMN...
BANG
DIE!

Sfx: boom
WHO ARE YOU —
.....

I AM
A PUPPET MASTER.
YOU'VE BEEN UNCONSCIOUS FOR 4 DAYS.
THE NEWS HAS BEEN GOING ON ABOUT MR. OKADA LATELY.
THE POLICE FOUND THE DEAD BODIES OF THE MISSING PEOPLE IN HIS HOUSE, AND IT CAUSED A HUGE COMMOTION.
MR OKADA'S DEAD?
...!

THE GIRL WHO BROUGHT YOU IN IS STILL WAITING OUTSIDE
WHAT HAPPENED?
I
DON'T REALLY KNOW EITHER
I FOLLOWED THE INSTRUCTIONS IN THE MESSAGE TO COME TO SHINJUKU, FIND THE DOLL MAKER AND COLLECT THE DOLL...
BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE DOLL MAKER OR DOLL ARE, AND I DON'T EVEN KNOW MYSELF WHAT THE PUPPET MASTER HAS TO DO...
JUST WHAT ARE YOU?
I GUESS I'M WHAT PEOPLE CALL A PUPPET MASTER
AND WHAT ABOUT THAT THING?

THAT'S WHY I NEED EYES THAT CAN SEE THE SHIKIGAMI.
SOMEONE'S CONTROLLING THEM FROM BEHIND THE SCENES!
THEY'RE CALLED SHIKIGAMI, AND THE TWO OF US ARE ENEMIES.
THEY'RE PROBABLY HUNTING FOR THE DOLL MAKER TOO.
.....



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act.2

WHAT? YOU WANT TO BE DISCHARGED?
ARE YOU NUTS, ELECTRICIAN?
turn
I'VE ALREADY BEEN HERE FIVE DAYS. I'M GOING TO BECOME A VEGETABLE IF I STAY HERE ANY LONGER!
OH REALLY? EVEN THOUGH YOU GOT ALL TEARY WHEN THAT GIRL HIT A WOUND OF YOURS YESTERDAY?
WHO SAID I GOT ALL TEARY?
THAT GIRL? OH, YOU MEAN THE ONE FROM THEN?
NOW THAT I THINK OF IT, WHAT HAPPENED TO HER?
.....

I NEED ...
A PAIR OF EYES THAT CAN SEE THE SHIKI-GAMI!
AND WHY SHOULD I HELP YOU OUT? SORRY, I DON'T FEEL LIKE IT!

AND WHY ARE YOU MAKING LIFE SO DIFFICULT FOR YOUR SELF?
WHY DON'T YOU JUST GO HOME AND FORGET ABOUT THE DOLL MAKER?
I WON'T DO IT, AND THAT'S THAT!
NO WAY!
KEEP DREAMING!
SEE YOU AROUND!
SNAP
EE!
FORGET IT!
rat
I ONLY HOPE THOSE EYES OF YOURS WON'T GIVE YOU ANY TROUBLE!
TAKE CARE!

IT'S NONE OF MY BUSINESS IF SHE LIVES OR DIES!
I'M NOT GOING TO GET UPSET OVER THAT LITTLE BRAT!
JUST THINKING ABOUT IT MAKES MY BLOOD BOIL!
I GUESS
IF YOU WANT TO BE DISCHARGED, PLEASE PAY FIRST.
I DON'T WORK FOR NOTHING!
ER SURE

IN THAT DISTANT, BLURRY VISION I HAD...
FRONT, RIGHT
LEFT, RIGHT
...
I SAW
...
A BOY WHO LOOKED LIKE NIMIYA STRETCHING HIS HAND OUT TOWARDS ME
THE EXIT...
OUTSIDE...
TWO OF THEM...

AND HE WAS SMILING AT ME!
"DOLLS."
THOSE BRIGHT EYES OF HIS...
IT ALMOST SEEMS LIKE MY VISIONS HAVE MERGED WITH REALITY...
FIND THE DOLL MAKER...
AND TAKE THE DOLL!"
SEEMED TO PENETRATE MY HEART AND LOOK RIGHT INTO MY DARKEST FEARS!

BUT IT'S JUST A HALLUCI-NATION!
AS LONG AS I STEER CLEAR OF THAT KID, THEY'LL DISAPPEAR ON THEIR OWN!

CRUNCH
wobble
"FIND THE DOLL MAKER
AND TAKE THE DOLL"...?

GAH, I DON'T HAVE A CLUE! WHERE CAN I START?
.....
JUST WHO WAS IT THAT SENT...
CR
UN
CH
THE MES-SAGE?
I'LL... BE FINE AFTER SOME REST..

I TOLD YOU A LONG TIME AGO NOT TO TOUCH THOSE THINGS!
IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS! I'M FINE!
HEY! ARE YOU OKAY?
HEY!
MM... MF!
PLEASE, COULD YOU CALL AN AMBU-LANCE?!
cough cough

AAAHH!
plat
WHAT?
ANOTHER SHIKI-GAMI!?

WHE-
RE IS
IT?

AAHH
...

whoosh
!!!

Sfx boom
WHAT WAS THAT?
AN EARTH-QUAKE?
IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S COMING FROM THE TEMPLE!
MAYBE A BOMB? SECURITY SURE IS POOR THESE DAYS!
WHOA! THE ENTIRE TEMPLE HAS BEEN BLOWN APART!
HUFF!
HUFF!
HUFF!

THERE HAVE BEEN MORE SHI-KIGAI LATELY... WHY?
DAMN
IF ONLY I KNEW WHERE THEY WERE, I WOULDN'T BE STRIKING AIMLESSLY
THIS IS SO TIRING ...
THE ELECTRI-CIAN...
HMPH!
I KNEW IT!
HE'S THE SOURCE OF ALL THIS TROUBLE!

BUT
I'VE BEEN AWAY FOR FIVE DAYS NOW. AND IF ALL I'VE GOT ARE OLD CUSTOMERS TELLING ME TO HURRY, I'M GONNA CRY.
I KNEW IT. ALL JUNK LOOKS LIKE I'VE GOT TO GO TO AKIBA* TO GET MORE JOBS!
*Short for Akihabara an electronics district in Japan
OH
A MAIL BOMB!
Hmm?
I MIGHT AS WELL JUST PIRATE STUFF FULL TIME.
click click click click click
SOMEONE ACTUALLY FLOODED MY MAIL-BOX!

I'VE FINALLY FOUND YOU, ELECTRICIAN!
HAVE YOU MANAGED TO COPY THAT GAME I ASKED FOR?
OH, THERE YOU ARE!
CLACK
HAH. LOOKS LIKE THE COMPUTER GOD REALLY WANTS ME TO TAKE A BREAK!
G'NIGHT THEN!
OH, IT'S YOU.
I FINISHED THAT AGES AGO!
I SENT YOU A COUPLE OF EMAILS BUT YOU NEVER RESPONDED
THANKS!
SORRY, I HAVEN'T BEEN HOME THE LAST FEW DAYS
BY THE WAY, I'D LIKE YOU TO VIRUS CHECK THESE FOR ME

I'D REALLY LIKE TO HELP YOU, BUT MY ONLY WORKING COMPUTER JUST KEELED OVER AND DIED.
I'M JUST EARNING SOME POCKET CHANGE!
IT'S REALLY EASY TO CRACK THE SECURITY ON THE LEGIT PROGRAMMES AND MAKE COPIES OF THEM.
BUT I DON'T HAVE THE STUFF TO MASS PRODUCE THESE WAREZ ON MY OWN.
WHAT, ARE YOU STARTING A SHOP NOW?
DUH! TAKE A LOOK AT THE THING!
SO YOU WON'T HELP ME?
REALLY?
COME ON OVER TO MY PLACE TO DO IT! I'LL PAY YOU BY THE HOUR!
Pull Pull
EH?
THEN I HAVE NO CHOICE
YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY, DON'T YOU? THE MORE TROUBLE A JOB IS, THE MORE IT'S WORTH!
WHAT —!
Push Push Push Push

SHOCK
OH, BY THE WAY. I SAW THIS STRANGE KID PACING OUTSIDE YOUR PLACE EARLIER. YOU KNOW HER?
STRANGE KID?
WHAT'S WRONG. ELECTRICIAN?
plance plance
COULDN'T BE?
HAHA

HMF!
IDIOT!
THE CUSTOMER WANTS IT RIGHT AWAY, SO WE HAVE TO HURRY.
!

YOU WANT SOME?
FORGET IT
SWEEP
HEY!
SLAM
SLAM
SLAM
SLAM
Gak!
CRAP!
MORI, I KNOW YOU'RE IN THERE!
HURRY AND OPEN UP!
WHAT'S GOING ON?

SORRY, ELECTRICIAN!
BYE!
HUH!?
thu
nk
clomp
clomp
clomp
WHERE ARE YOU HIDING TODAY, MORI?!
COME OUT!
.....
MY MY
I WONDER WHY THOSE TWO GANGSTERS ARE HERE

HE'S A CHEAT!
RAN OFF WITHOUT PAYING HIS DEBT!
AND WHO ARE YOU?
WHY'RE YOU LOOKING FOR MORI?
He's here...
WHO'RE YOU? MORI'S FRIEND?
I HEARD HE'S JUST STARTED PRODUCING STUFF
AND HE'S MADE A LOT OF MONEY!
IF THAT'S THE CASE, DON'T YOU THINK HE CAN SHARE SOME?
YOU SHOULD FORGET IT.
HE SPENT ON ALL HIS MONEY ON DRUGS.
THAT SO? WELL THEN, WHY DON'T YOU PAY FOR HIM?
AREN'T YOU HIS FRIEND?
DON'T JOKE AROUND. I'M JUST HERE DOING A JOB FOR HIM!
HE'S MY CUS-TOMER!
EH?

HE MADE A PILE OFF CRACKING CODES.
EH? YOU KNOW HIM?
HE'S ONE OF THEM FROM SHINJUKU!
YOU'RE THE ELECTRICIAN?
OW!
grab
AND HE HELPED HIS "COLLEAGUES" WRECK MY BUSINESS!
YOUR OWN BAD LUCK!
Shit that hurts!
ARE YOU HURT?
jump
HMPH!
ALL HE DOES IS CAUSE ME TROUBLE!

SO MORI GOT THE NERVE TO COME BACK?
YOU LITTLE ...
!! SMASH
WHAT'S GOING ON?
SLAM
!!
THANKS!

Sign: Lotterian Burgers

SO WHAT? WE'RE FRIENDS!
WHAT'S THE HARM IN WATCHING OUT FOR YOUR BUDDIES ON THE STREET?
YOU'RE REALLY NUTS!
YOU'VE BEEN FOLLOWING ME THE PAST FEW DAYS, HAVEN'T YOU?
I REALLY DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW YOU PICK YOUR FRIENDS.
(I hope Aine, you should like me too)
REALLY? THEN WHAT ABOUT THAT STRANGE DOCTOR?
SORRY, BUT I DON'T MAKE FRIENDS THAT EASY!
INGRATE!
PUSH
I'M PAYING FOR THE FOOD, AREN'T I?
ANY-WAY!
I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU SAY, I'M NOT GOING TO HANG OUT WITH YOU!

THANKS FOR SAVING ME!
BYE!
TAP
HE'S REALLY STUB-BORN
THAT KID'S A REAL PAIN!
DAMN!
HE'S NO GOOD
THIS FELLA'S JUST AS BAD
HEY!
!
ACK!

GRRR
Grgh!
I really don't envy you
YOU'RE GOING TO GET IN TROUBLE WITH YOUR BOSS IF YOU CAN'T MAKE HIM AT LEAST COUGH SOME MONEY UP?
I UNDERSTAND YOUR PAIN
dash
...DAMN!
I JUST SAW MORI AT THE COFFEE HOUSE OVER THERE!
MY, YOU MUST BE REALLY BORED IF YOU'VE GOT THE TIME TO HARASS ME
YOU!? HOW DARE YOU ...
!
RIING
RIING
RIING
RIING
THIS GUY

I'M SORRY!
OH BY THE WAY
IS THERE A PILE OF PILLS BY THE COMPUTER MONITOR? COULD YOU BRING THEM TO ME?
HELLO? IS THIS MORI?
HEY, ARE THEY GONE, ELECTRICIAN?
GONE? YOU'RE ONE TO TALK I ALMOST GOT INTO DEEP SHIT BECAUSE OF YOU!
ARE YOU OKAY? YOU SOUND A LITTLE STRANGE ...
YOU THERE, MORI?
PLEASE!
I'M AT ...
安全十集

!
HURRY
GIVE IT TO ME!
gobble
gobble
gobble
gobble
DIDN'T YOU JUST TAKE TWO BEFORE YOU LEFT?
WHAT ARE THOSE?
HUH... I DON'T REALLY KNOW MYSELF.
I BOUGHT THEM AT THE PUB IN IKE-BUKURO.
I HEARD THAT THEY'RE MIXED UP BY SOME MED STUDENTS

TRAZODONE
AFTER TAKING SO MUCH I BET YOUR MIND'S BLANK
AND YOU JUST WANT TO SIT DOWN AND FLOAT
!
GAH! COUGH!
HEY!
MORI!
SFX: COUGH

IT'S...
EXACTLY LIKE THAT GIRL AT THE TEMPLE!
GERK
GERK
DAMN! WHAT HAP-PENED!?
MORI! PULL YOUR-SELF TO-GETH-ER!
AHH...
Six horses

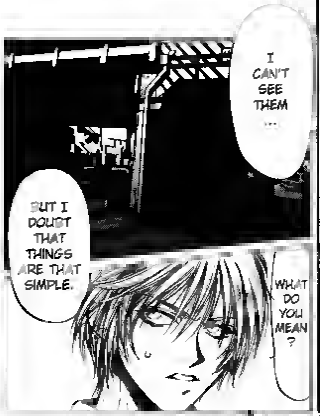
SHIKIGAMI?!!
GRAP!
!
WHY?
WHY CAN YOU SEE US?

Sfx slam
Sfx slam
grab
THROB
OUCH ...
Crash
GAH!
DAMN IT!
DIE ALREADY!
THUNK

HE
CAN SEE
US
WHY?
Thud
WHY?
HEY!
NEED A HAND?
!!
DAMN IT! IF I'D KNOWN I WAS GOING TO RUN INTO THOSE THINGS
I'D HAVE TAKEN A GUN WITH ME!

DON'T YOU THINK I HAVE GREAT TIMING?
NIMI-YA!
YOU WERE STILL STALKING ME!?
HMPH!
SINCE YOU CAN'T DEAL WITH A SHIKI-GAMI ON YOUR OWN!
HEY, GET YOUR FACTS STRAIGHT. THIS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH ME.
HOW COULD YOU BLAME ME FOR THE INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF SHIKI-GAMI?
WHY ARE THOSE THINGS BAD?
I KNEW MEETING YOU WOULD JINX ME!
DIDN'T THAT SHIKIGAMI COME FROM THAT PILL-POPPING FRIEND OF YOURS?

I SAW SOMETHING LIKE THAT EARLIER,
AND I THINK THEY'RE THE SAME KIND OF PILLS
ARE YOU SAYING THAT THE SHIKIGAMI COME FROM THOSE PILLS?
ONLY A FOOL WOULD BUY THAT!
HEY!
I'M JUST POINTING OUT THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE TWO CASES!
I DON'T KNOW ANY MORE THAN YOU DO, SO QUIT TAKING YOUR ANGER OUT ON ME!
...
WHY AM I SO ANGRY ?
FOR-GET IT.
WHAT?


I CAN'T SEE THEM ...
BUT I DOUBT THAT THINGS ARE THAT SIMPLE.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

I DON'T SEE IT
HAS IT STOPPED CHASING US?
WHO KNOWS?

BUT ...
YOU CAN SEE THEM, CAN'T YOU?

DIDN'T YOU THROW A ROADBLOCK AT THE SHIKIGAMI EARLIER?
YELLOW THINGS HAVE THE POWER TO DISPERSE EVIL
MAYBE YOU REALLY DID CHASE IT AWAY

...?
ORDINARY FOLKS CAN'T SEE SHIKIGAMI
AND YET YOU CAN!!
QUIT TRYING TO SCARE ME!
SO THERE'S NO WAY THEY'RE GOING TO LET YOU OFF THE HOOK
I'M TELLING THE TRUTH!
YOU DON'T HAVE ANY DEFENCE AGAINST THEM.
ALTHOUGH YOU CAN SEE THEM,

Sfx crashes
DAMN!

NIMIYA! ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND?!
WE CAN'T HIDE FROM THEM!
IF YOU DON'T WANT TO DIE
THEN BE MY EYES!
SFX: slams
!
...!
NO WAY!

STUB-BORN ASS!
TAKE A LOOK AROUND YOU!
HURRY!
Sfx: slam
WHERE IS IT?!
DAMN ...
IT'S ABOVE YOU, TO YOUR RIGHT!

YOU MISSED!
IT'S IN FRONT OF ME! ABOUT FIVE TO SIX METERS!

SLAM
I SHOULD HAVE HIT IT!
IS IT DEAD?
THUD
THAT WAS GREAT!
LET'S KEEP THIS UP!

gra
b
QUIT DREAMING!
DIDN'T I MAKE MYSELF CLEAR?
FINDING THE DOLL MAKER OR WHATEVER IS YOUR JOB IT'S GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH ME
LISTEN GOOD!
I DON'T WANT TO HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH YOU!
THIS IS THE LAST TIME I'M HELPING YOU!
SO WATCH YOUR BACK FROM NOW ON!

NO MATTER WHAT YOU SAY.
I WON'T CHANGE MY MIND!
I'VE GOT TO FIND A WAY TO FIND THE DOLL MAKER AND FULFILL MY DUTY!
BUT I CAN'T SEE MY ENEMIES AND I DON'T HAVE ANY CLUES
SINCE YOU CAN SEE THE SHIKIGAMI, THERE'S NO WAY I'M LETTING YOU GO SO EASILY!
SO I'M GOING TO USE YOU AS BAIT TO LURE THEM OVER, AND THEN GET THE INFO I NEED FROM THEM!
Thud

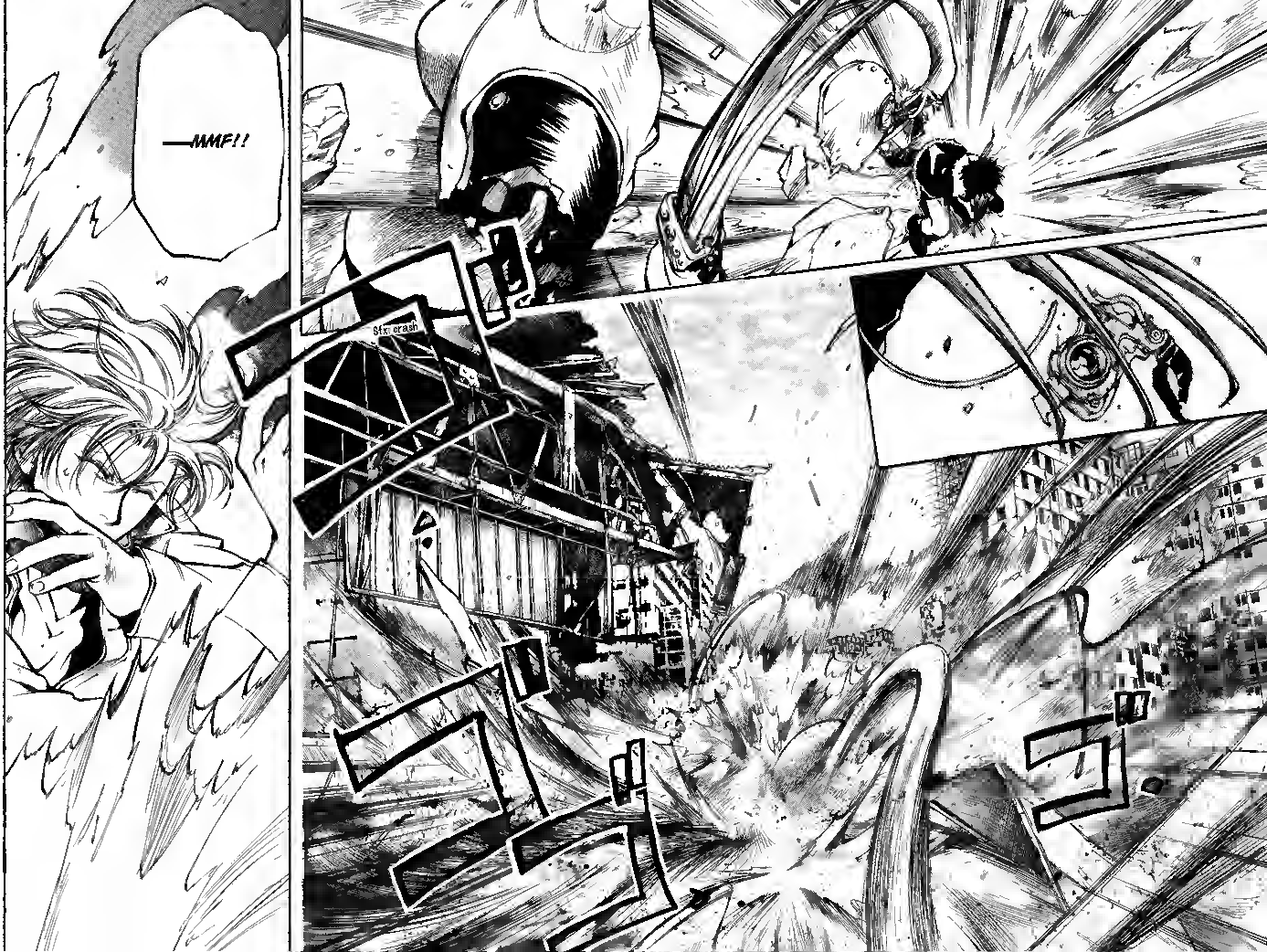
BUT NO MATTER WHAT YOU SAY...
YOU'RE MY SECRET WEAPON!
GO AHEAD AND TELL ME YOU WON'T HELP
I'M NOT LETTING YOU GET AWAY!

THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO IT!
YOU CAN NEVER ESCAPE FROM ME!

PU
SH
I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOU!!
GET LOST!
oh
!!

Sfx: slam
FINE THEN

メキメキメキ
Sfx: rumble
YOU IDIOT, WHERE ARE YOU AIMING—


—MMF!!
Str: crash

NIMIYA!!
NIMIYA...?

"BE MY EYES!"

"FIND THE DOLL MAKER
THIS MUST BE SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT TO HER
AND TAKE THE DOLL!"
WHY?
WHY DOES SHE LOOK JUST LIKE HIM?
WHY DOES HE HAVE THE SAME POWER AS NIMIYA?
WHY?

NIMIYA—
WHERE IS SHE?
DOC-TOR
HOW'S THAT IDIOT BEEN OF LATE?
MM. I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM FOR A COUPLE DAYS.
MAYBE HE'S BEEN BUSY?
That guy isn't capable enough to take care of himself.
BUT...

Clack
HEY, DOC, HEAR ME OUT!
HE SHOULD BE MAKING AN APPEARANCE SOON.
I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR SOMEONE LATELY, BUT I JUST CAN'T SEEM TO FIND HER.
YOU REMEMBER THE GIRL THAT BROUGHT ME HERE?
THAT IS ODD
I'VE GOT SOMETHING I'VE GOT TO TELL HER, OR IT'S GOING TO BUG ME FOREVER!
DIDN'T YOU SAY YOU DIDN'T WANT TO HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH HER?
Uhhh!
SOMETHING HAPPENED AFTER THAT, AND I'VE BEEN FEELING A LITTLE GUILTY

pull
HI!
I PICKED HER UP
WHAT'S SHE DOING HERE?
Calm down.
I DIDN'T HAVE THE HEART TO LEAVE HER LYING IN THE STREETS.
tremble
Idiot!
DO YOU KNOW HOW LONG I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU?
ALL RIGHT AL-READY!
WHAT'S WITH YELL-ING AT SOMEONE RIGHT WHEN YOU SEE THEM!

DO YOU THINK SHE'S A STRAY DOG OR SOMETHING? LYING IN THE STREETS!
IT'S TRUE!
SHE WAS EX-HAUST-ED!
YOU DON'T USUALLY FIND YOUNG PEOPLE LIKE HER COL-LAPSING ON THE STREETS FROM EXHAUSTION
I DON'T KNOW WHAT SHE'S BEEN DOING
WHAT? WANNA FIGHT?
(I'll finish eating before I join the conversation.)

HEY, THANKS FOR LOOKING AFTER HER, WEI.
I'M TAKING HER WITH ME.
!?
HEY, WAIT A SEC!
OH?
BYE THEN, NIMIYA!
DROP BY WHEN YOU'RE FREE!
drag drag
drag drag
.....

THIS IS CALLED PAY-BACK!
THUNK
LET GO OF ME!
HEY!
ELEC-TRI-CIAN!
THERE'S SOME STUFF THAT I WANT TO FIGURE OUT TOO
EH?

SO I'LL BE YOUR EYES!
BUT YOU'VE GOT TO LEND ME YOUR STRENGTH!

OKAY
???
WE'LL START FROM HERE!
MORI CHANGED AFTER TAKING THESE PILLS.
YOU SAW SOMETHING LIKE IT BEFORE RIGHT?
THAT'S WHY WE'VE GOT TO FIGURE OUT WHAT'S IN THESE PILLS!
IF THOSE THINGS SHOW UP, IT'S UP TO YOU TO TAKE CARE OF THEM
AND ONE MORE THING
I SHOULDN'T HAVE SAID WHAT I DID I APOLOGISE
ER
JUMP
THIS IS INCREDIBLE!
Pat
WHAT'S UNBELIEVABLE?
THIS IS UNBELIEVABLE!

WHAT'S WEI BEEN TELLING YOU?
HE TALKED TO ME WHEN I WENT TO VISIT YOU
HE SAID IF I WANTED TO CHANGE YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS ME...
YOUR ATTITUDE HAS CHANGED SO MUCH!
I NEVER EXPECTED IT TO BE EFFECTIVE!
Uh huh!
LOOKS LIKE THE DOC'S REALLY ONE SMART GUY!
I SHOULD JUST BACK OFF...
FHL
BUT NEVER MIND THAT! WE'RE GOING TO BE PARTNERS FROM NOW ON!
I'VE SUDDENLY GOT THE FEELING I'VE BEEN SET UP
Pat

KUGUTSU

VOLUME 01 CHAPTER 03

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act.3

huff
huff
huff
huff
JUST WHO IS HE, CHEN?
AND WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT!?
THAT WASN'T HIM!
IT'S THE THINGS HE HAS WITH HIM...
AND WE CAN'T SEE THEM!

crack
crack
crack
Sfx slam
!!
IF YOU DON'T WANT TO CO-OPERATE,
THEN SURRENDER YOUR BODY!
YOU'RE JUST NOW GETTING SCARED?

I'M AFRAID I DON'T HAVE THE GOODS TODAY. I'M SO SORRY
...
THE GOODS ARE ORGANS
?
SO WHAT?
WHY DON'T YOU GET THIS LAD OF YOURS TO TAKE THEIR PLACE?
PLEASE... DON'T DRAG HIM INTO THIS!
...THAT YOUNG LAD BY YOUR SIDE LOOKS PRETTY STRONG.

HON-
ESTLY!
I'VE GOT EVERYTHING EXCEPT THE GOODS YOU WERE SUP-POSED TO PROVIDE!
BUT THERE'S BEEN SO MUCH GOING ON LATELY YOU MUST HAVE HAD YOUR OWN DIFFICULTIES TOO, RIGHT?
WHY DON'T YOU TALK ABOUT IT AND WE CAN TRY TO SEE IF WE CAN WORK SOME-THING OUT?
—
THEN I'LL BE HONEST WITH YOU!
EVER SINCE THE LAST CLASH WITH THE UN-DERWORLD LAST YEAR THE POLICE HAVE BEEN KEEPING TABS ON US,
AND LAST MONTH ONE OF MY BOYS WAS MYSTERIOUSLY KILLED...
WHEN YOU TAKE EVERYTHING INTO ACCOUNT IT PUTS THE OR-GANISATION IN A VERY TOUGH POSITION...

THE POLICE ARE KEEPING A VERY TIGHT WATCH ON US FOREIGN SYNDICATES
IF THE HEAD OF THE ORGINISATION IS LEFT EMPTY FOR TOO LONG, IT'LL BE VERY VULNERABLE TO ATTACKS
MANY OF OUR HIGHER UPS HAVE BEEN ARRESTED BY THE POLICE WITHOUT REASON,
AND ONE OF THEM WAS IN CHARGE OF THE ORGAN TRADE
WE'RE BACKED IN A CORNER AND HAVE TO KEEP QUIET..
MYSTERIOUSLY KILLED HIM?
EH?
JUST RECENTLY THERE WAS THIS PROSTITUTE BROUGHT IN. HER NAME WAS SELENA, A COLUMBIAN, I THINK...
I HEARD THAT A REGULAR OF HERS INVITED HER TO A PARTY AT THE SHINOKUBO HOTEL..
THEN THAT CLIENT STARTED PUSHING SOME KIND OF STRANGE NEW DRUG. IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE ONE OF THE GUYS WHO HAD TAKEN IT SUDDENLY BEGAN HAVING SEIZURES

AND DIED WHEN HIS BELLY ERUPTED, ALMOST LIKE IT'D BEEN BLOWN APART BY EXPLOSIVES.
SHE PASSED AWAY BEFORE DAWN
THERE WERE FOUR OTHER HOOKERS THERE BESIDES HER.
BUT THOSE FOUR ALSO DIED MYSTERIOUSLY. IT WAS ALMOST AS IF THEY WERE KILLED FOR WITNESSING SOMETHING THEY SHOULDN'T HAVE
THE CAUSE OF DEATH WAS HER INTERNAL ORGANS RUPTURING BUT OTHER THAN THAT, SHE DIDN'T HAVE ANY EXTERNAL INJURIES.
IS THAT LAST GIRL STILL ALIVE?
BUT THAT CAUSE OF DEATH IS EXCEEDINGLY RARE. IT'S ALMOST LIKE THE ORGANS WERE EXPANDING AND CONTRACTING SO RAPIDLY THAT THEY JUST BROKE APART.
WELL, I CAN'T HELP BUT RECALL THAT RUMOUR I HEARD A WHILE BACK

I THINK THE ONE WHO DIED IN THE HOTEL WAS ONE OF YOUR BOYS
THE RUMOURS ARE THAT THESE CAPSULES ARE LINKED WITH YOU GUYS—
SO IT'S NO WONDER THAT THE POLICE KEEP CLAMPING DOWN ON YOU
THESE CAPSULES WERE BROUGHT TO ME BY AN INVESTIGATION EXPERT THAT I KNOW
HE WANTED ME TO ANALYSE THE SUBSTANCES IN THESE FOR HIM
DOCTOR, YOU'RE MISTAKEN
THE ORGANISATION HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THOSE THINGS
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
BUT WITH THE POLICE BREATHING DOWN OUR NECKS LIKE THAT, WHY WOULD WE POSSIBLY RISK THE DRUG TRADE?
ACTUALLY, WE'VE BEEN TRYING TO TRACK HIM DOWN FOR QUITE A WHILE SO WE COULD FIND OUT WHERE THOSE CAPSULES CAME FROM.
THE GUY WHO DIED IN THE HOTEL WAS INDEED ONE OF OURS, BUT HE'D BEEN MISSING FOR QUITE A WHILE
WE KNEW THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING WRONG WITH THOSE CAPSULES, AND WE KNEW THAT SOMEONE WAS SELLING THOSE CAPSULES UNDER OUR ORGANISATION'S NAME

HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE SOURCE OF THESE THINGS?
EH?
AND IN THE END THE ONLY CLUE TURNED INTO A CORPSE?
TOUGH LUCK.
ACTUALLY, I'M VERY INTERESTED IN THEM.
IF YOU TELL ME EVERYTHING YOU KNOW,
I'D BE WILLING OVERLOOK THE MATTER OF THE GOODS
WHY YOU...!
THE SUPPLIER IS CHINESE,
AND HIS NAME IS CHEN XUAN TAI

HE'S JUST A DOCTOR!
AND HE'S IN THE ILLEGAL ORGAN TRADE! SHOULDN'T THAT GIVE YOU PLENTY OF HOLD OVER HIM?
QUIET!
I DON'T GET IT!
WHY DO WE STILL HAVE TO GIVE IN TO HIM!?
ONLY A FOOL WOULD MAKE AN ENEMY OF THAT DOCTOR.
I'M NOT TIRED OF MY LIFE YET.
THERE ARE JUST SOME PEOPLE YOU CAN'T OFFEND IT'LL DO YOU GOOD TO REMEMBER THAT.
DOCTOR WEI!

YOU STILL CAN'T CONTACT THE ELECTRICIAN?
NOPE, I CAN'T GET HIM FOR SOME REASON.
REALLY...
THE BODY THIS MORNING HAS BEEN DISPOSED OF. HERE'S THE REPORT.
THANKS A LOT.
IT SEEMS LIKE THESE SYMPTOMS ARE GETTING MORE COMMON.
INDEED.
JUST WHAT EXACTLY IS THIS?

YUP!
I'LL LET YOU KNOW IF I GET ANY LEADS.
BYE!
RIGHT, THANKS THEN!
click

HEY, NIMIYA!
YOU HUNGRY?
I'VE GOT SOME LUNCH HERE
I DO SLEEP SO MIND YOUR OWN SUSHI-NESS!
DON'T YOU GET TIRED WITHOUT ANY REST?
OH?
SUIT YOUR-SELF!
OH I ALMOST FORGOT
I'VE BEEN CHECKING UP ON THOSE CAPSULES, AND I CAN'T FIND THE ORIGINAL SOURCE..
BUT I FOUND A DEALER NAMED CHEN XUAN TAI.
HE ENTERED JAPAN WITH A STUDENT VISA, BUT IT EXPIRED AGES AGO

THE CHEN GUY IS OFTEN SEEN AROUND THE THEATRE...
I'LL GO CHECK IT OUT
THAT'S NOT GOOD ENOUGH THERE ARE AT LEAST TEN GROUPS LIKE THAT SHINJUKU
THE CURRENT HEAD OF ONE OF CHINESE MAFIA IN SHINJUKU IS EARNING HIS KEEP WITH SOME BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS
THE DRUG TRADE'S ONE OF THEM
WHAT'S THE HURRY?
WE'VE JUST STARTED
CAN'T WE NARROW IT DOWN ANY FURTHER?
I'M GOING TOO!
FORGET IT!
WHY?
I ADMIT I'M NOT ALL THAT FAMILIAR WITH THE PLACE...
BUT GETTING SOME PUNK TO TALK ISN'T ANY TROUBLE FOR ME.
AREN'T YOU A LITTLE TOO PRO-VIOLENCE?

BESIDES, I BOTCHED UP HIS LAST JOB,
SO YOU CAN APOLOGISE TO HIM FOR ME
I'M COUNTING ON YOU!
YOU'D BETTER NOT COME WITH ME. WHY DON'T YOU MAKE A TRIP TO WEI'S FOR ME?
WHY?
YOU CAN COLLECT THE REPORT ABOUT THE DRUG SAMPLES I SENT FOR ANALYSIS
HMM'M
Slam
THAT WAS A QUICK GET-AWAY...
SHE'S REALLY HIGH-STRUNG ...
BUT IT'S NO WONDER, CONSIDERING ALL THE STRANGE THINGS SHE'S COME IN CONTACT WITH...

"THE MESSENGER SPIRIT TOLD ME TO, SO I CAME TO SHINJUKU."
SHE DOESN'T EVEN KNOW WHO SENT IT AND SHE CAME RUNNING ALL THE WAY HERE?
"JUST WHAT IS THIS "DOLL MAKER" ANYWAY?" "I DON'T KNOW."
AND SHE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT'S SHE'S LOOKING FOR? SO WHY'S SHE HERE?
I DON'T REALLY KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT HER,
AND SHE DOESN'T LIKE TO TALK
...
WHAT REASON
Bump
WATCH IT, WILL YA?

Box in

JUST WHEN DID THEY APPEAR?!

HUFF
??????

MILANO
WHEN DID THIS START?
NIMIYA'S RIGHT! THEY'RE REALLY INCREASING IN NUMBER!
BUT WHY ARE THEY SUDDENLY APPEARING?

I REALLY HOPE THIS IS JUST MY IMAGI-NATION ....
!?
AH!
WAIT!

WHAT?
SEARCH-ING...
BEFORE THE BALANCE CRUM-BLES...
STOP THEM...
SORRY...
BUT COULD YOU RETURN WHAT YOUR CROW TOOK FROM ME?
THEY'RE CALLED OSHIRA...
HEY POPS, WHO'RE YOU TALK-ING TO?
JUST GIVE ME BACK MY STUFF!
THOUGH I DOUBT YOUNG MEN LIKE YOUR-SELF... WILL BE ABLE TO UNDER-STAND
THE ROOT OF IT WAS SOWN AGES AGO.

YOU MUST NOT
ALLOW THE PUPPET MASTER NEAR GORYOUKAI!!

*Trans-action: the place of sacred spirits
HEY GRAMPS
...
jump
Shk flap flap flap
...MF!

DAMN!

—SO WHERE'S CHEN?

THAT'S TRUE. AS LONG AS HE DEPENDS ON US...
HE'LL COME!

HE HASN'T COME BACK YET?
NOPE, BUT I'M SURE HE'LL SHOW UP SOMETIME

*Ka-men
THE "SHOP"?
I'LL WAIT FOR HIM IN THE SHOP, THEN.
BYE!
OKAY!
!
.....

YOU'RE NOT JUST A DOCTOR, ARE YOU,
WEI?
... HI!
ARE YOU FEELING OKAY?
HM ...
I WONDER WHERE HE'S BEEN. I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO CONTACT HIM LATELY...
RIGHT NOW HE'S LOOKING FOR SOMEONE CONNECTED TO THAT DRUG HE GAVE YOU.
THE ELECTRICIAN SENT ME HERE FOR HIS ANALYSIS REPORT.
... EH?

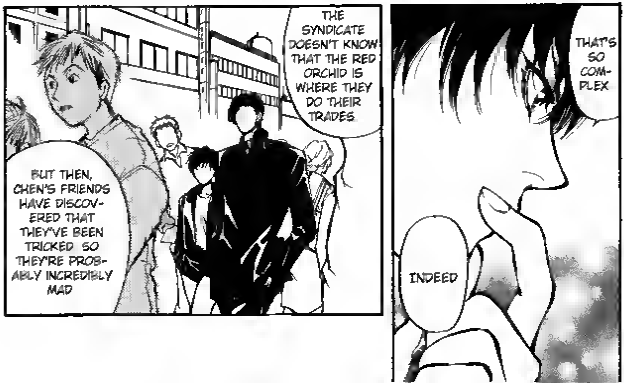
HOW'D YOU KNOW? THAT GUY WHO JUST LEFT TOLD YOU?
WHAT GREAT TIMING
YOU WANT TO COME ALONG?
CHEN?
WHERE TO?
HM... HOW ABOUT AROUND THE "RED ORCHID"?
THE CHINESE LOVE THAT CHINESE RESTAU-RANT,
THOUGH THEY AREN'T THERE FOR THE FOOD.
GAH! THIS IS VILE!

yum
yum
They actually dare serve stuff like this?
!
tink
HEY!
LOOK-ING FOR A JOB -?
A FRIEND OF MY GIRL SAID TO ASK AROUND HERE
SHE TOLD ME THAT THERE SHOULD BE SOMETHING FOR ME TO DO
I'M LOOK-ING FOR A JOB

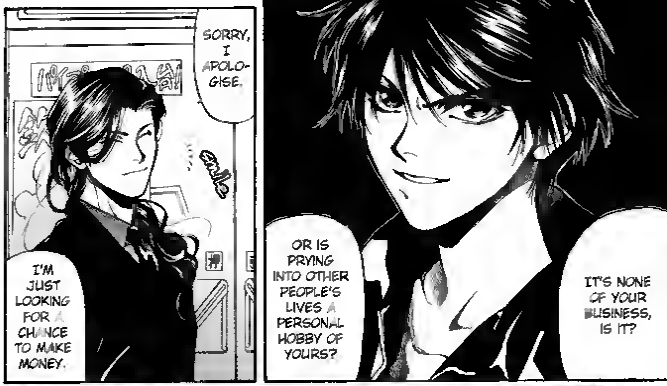
STAND
STAND
CHEN?
GAH...
JUST WHAT IS THE ELEC-TRICIAN TRYING TO FIND?
WELL
scratch scratch
HOW CAN I SAY IT
RUMBLE

SO WHAT'S UP WITH THE RED ORCHID?
YOU'VE GOT TO OBSERVE BEFORE YOU TAKE ANY ACTION,
OR YOU'RE JUST GOING TO GIVE YOURSELF A TON OF TROUBLE.

AND SAID THAT IT WAS A DRUG FROM THE CHINESE SYNDICATE TO GET THE BUYER'S TRUST.
THE RED ORCHID LOOKS LIKE A CHINESE RESTAURANT, BUT EVERYONE KNOWS THAT IT'S REALLY A BLACK MARKET.
THAT'S WHY THE SYNDICATE'S TRYING TO FIND HIM.
CHEN PROBABLY BROUGHT THE CAPSULES THERE TO SELL BECAUSE HE WAS LOW ON CASH...


THE SYNDICATE DOESN'T KNOW THAT THE RED ORCHID IS WHERE THEY DO THEIR TRADES.
BUT THEN, CHEN'S FRIENDS HAVE DISCOVERED THAT THEY'VE BEEN TRICKED. SO THEY'RE PROBABLY INCREDIBLY MAD
THAT'S SO COMPLEX
INDEED

THIS HAS SOME IMPACT ON ME
SINCE I CAN'T CONTACT HIM, I'VE GOT TO MAKE A TRIP ON MY OWN
SO?
YOU'RE GOING TO HELP THE ELECTRICIAN?
YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE THE KIND WHO'D STICK HIS NECK OUT FOR HIS FRIENDS
ARE YOU HIS ASSISTANT?
...I GUESS SO
hehe
YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE OKIDA'S SISTER
...
ARE YOU A RUN-AWAY?
OR ARE YOU...
HIDING FROM SOMEONE?


SORRY, I APOLOGISE.
I'M JUST LOOKING FOR A CHANCE TO MAKE MONEY.
OR IS PRYING INTO OTHER PEOPLE'S LIVES A PERSONAL HOBBY OF YOURS?
IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS, IS IT?

I REMEMBER IT WAS SOMEWHERE AROUND HERE...
ARE WE THERE YET?

NOTHING! JUST GO ON AHEAD!
GRAND-PA?
WHAT'S WRONG?
—?

OPEN
GRAND-PA!

I MUST HAVE MADE A MISTAKE...
HE COULDN'T BE MY GRANDFATHER...
GRANDPA DIED A LONG TIME AGO
FLUTTER
FLUTTER
COLOR FILE
WHAT THE HELL AM I DOING!?

OUCH! THAT HURTS! LEGGO!
WE CAN TALK THINGS OVER THERE'S NO NEED FOR VIOLENCE
YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW WHERE CHEN IS?
OBVIOUSLY I THOUGHT I COULD FIND HIM HERE!
BUT WHAT'S HE DONE? WHY DO YOU WANT TO FIND HIM SO BAD?
HE TRICKED US INTO BUYING SOME GOODS,
AND IT'S CAUSING US A LOT OF TROUBLE!
IF WE DON'T HAND HIM OVER TO THE ORGANISATION SOON WE'LL BE THE ONES IN TROUBLE!

DIDN'T YOU EARN SOME CASH ON THAT DEAL?
YOU MEAN THE CAPSULES?
IF WE'D KNOWN HE WAS LYING TO US WE NEVER WOULD HAVE TAKEN THOSE THINGS!
WHOEVER BRINGS THE STUFF IN HAS TO TAKE FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR IT!
PU SH
THAT'S GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH ME.
CHEN WILL BE COMING, RIGHT? I'LL WAIT FOR HIM.
JUST WHO ARE YOU?
HOW ELSE COULD YOU HAVE KNOW ABOUT CHEN AND THE CAPSULES?
EH?
ME?
I'M JUST AN ELECTRICIAN
WE FOUND HONG'S BODY IN THE ALLEY NEAR HERE NOT LONG AGO.
HE WAS CHEN'S FRIEND AND ANOTHER DEALER FOR THOSE CAPSULES.

WAIT A MINUTE I...
DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE THE GUY WHO TOLD CHEN TO TRICK US?!
IT'S GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH ME!
I'M JUST ...
GET HIM!
FOOOE!
ARE YOU JUST GONNA PICK ANYONE TO BE YOUR SCAPE-GOAT?!
RUSTLE
HE'S GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH CHEN AT ALL!
.....
WHO THE HECK ARE YOU?

IDIOT!
WEI?
TCH
...
...
YOU SEEM UNWELCOME WHEREVER YOU GO!
Ouch—that stings
SLAM
!
FORGET IT, I WANT TO ASK—

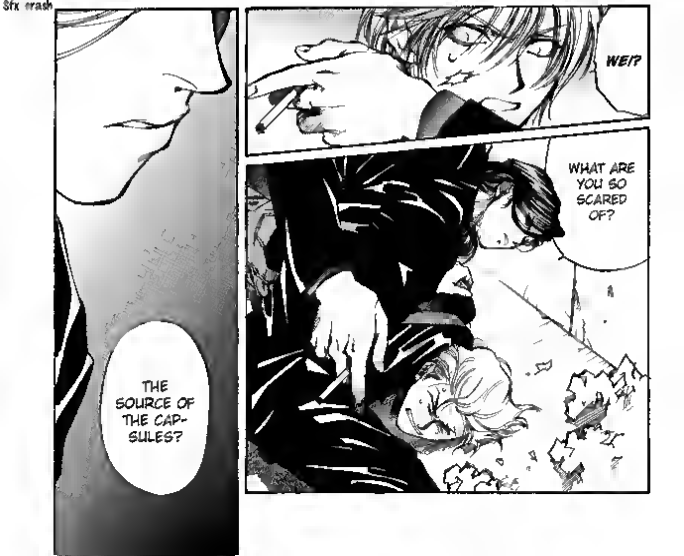
SAVE ME!
THERE'S SOME-THING WEIRD CHASING ME!
ARE YOU CHEN XUAN TAI?
.....!?
I'LL BORROW HIM FOR A BIT!
IS THAT OKAY?

DON'T YOU KNOW WHAT A PRECARIOUS SITUATION YOU'RE IN?
WHO ARE YOU!?
THE MAFIA KNOWS THAT YOU DID BUSINESS USING THEIR NAME. THEY'RE NOT HAPPY WITH YOU AND HAVE TRAPS EVERYWHERE TO BRING YOU IN
I'M NOT CONNECTED TO THEM, BUT I'M NO LESS POWERFUL THAN THEY ARE
YOU'RE OUT OF FRIENDS TO HELP YOU
SO WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME WHERE YOU GOT THE CAPSULES FROM?
IF YOU'RE CAUGHT BY THEM, YOU'RE LIKELY TO WIND UP DEAD

I DON'T KNOW... AND EVEN IF I DID, I COULDN'T TELL YOU!
I'LL BE KILLED!
I DON'T KNOW! I DON'T KNOW ANY-THING!
IF YOU TALK I CAN GUARANTEE YOUR SAFETY.
YOU'RE GOING TO BE KILLED IF YOU DON'T TALK.
WHEN YOU CAME IN—
YOU SAID THAT SOMETHING WEIRD WAS CHASING YOU.
WHAT WAS IT?
NO WAY! THEY'RE EVEN SCARIER THAN THE ORGANI-SATION!

YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW WHEN TO TAKE GOOD ADVICE!
...!

Sfx: crash


WE!?
WHAT ARE YOU SO SCARED OF?
THE SOURCE OF THE CAP-SULES?

I'M NOT GOING TO GO EASY ON YOU!
HE'S A THAI CALLED LIAM!
I RAN INTO HIM AT A GAME ROOM IN KABUKI!
THAT'S ALL I KNOW!

!
Ruff
ELEC-
TRICIAN
YOU UP
FOR A
JOB?
cough
cough
WHAT
ABOUT
HIM?
DIDN'T
YOU...
PROM-
ISE TO
TAKE
CARE
OF
HIM?
DID I?
HEY!
THAT'S
PRETTY
LOW
..
I'LL

BE KILLED
SFX hack
BY THE THING THAT CAN'T BE SEEN!
cough cough
HURRY AND GET OUT OF HERE, WEI!
... WHY?

Sfx: thud, slam, crash
JUST WHAT IS THIS!?
Sfx: slam
Sfx: crash
!

THIS WAY!
HURRY!
DIDN'T NIMIYA GO TO YOUR PLACE?
NIMIYA? SHE HAD SOMETHING TO DO, SO SHE RAN OFF
JUST WHAT DO YOU SEE?

TWO OF THEM!
Sfx jump

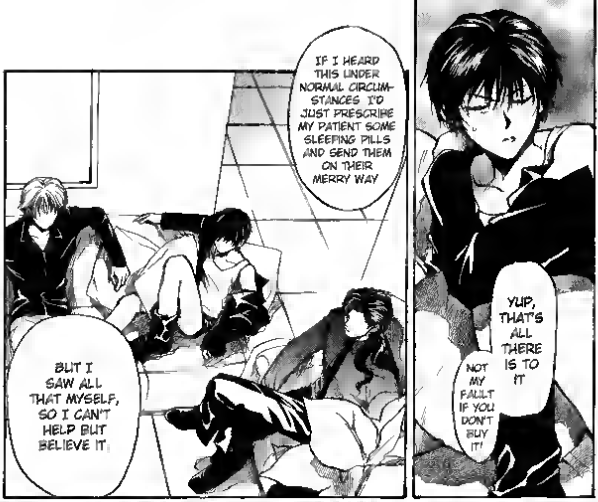
WHOO
SH
DAMN!
THIS ...
SWi
SH
Sfx slam slam slam
IS THE "THING THAT CAN'T BE SEEN"?
Slice

GRAB
!!
CRAP!
!!

SORRY I'M LATE!
CL
ACK
ONE'S UP AND TO MY RIGHT! NEAR THE POWER LINES!
IT'S OKAY— AT LEAST I'M STILL IN ONE PIECE
THE SHIKIGAMI?

SLIP
—AFFIR-MATIVE!
YOU DE-STROYED ONE
AND THE OTHER LEFT
?
ELEC-TRI-CIAN!
WHERE ARE THEY?

!!
THEY SEEMED PRETTY FAST THIS TIME
STOP
HMMM
THAT !!?


IF I HEARD THIS UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES I'D JUST PRESCRIBE MY PATIENT SOME SLEEPING PILLS AND SEND THEM ON THEIR MERRY WAY
BUT I SAW ALL THAT MYSELF, SO I CAN'T HELP BUT BELIEVE IT.
YUP, THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO IT
NOT MY FAULT IF YOU DON'T BUY IT!

SO THE CAPSULES ARE THE REASON BEHIND EVERYTHING THAT'S BEEN GOING ON...

METHAMPHETAMINE, EPHEDRINE AND CALCIUM CARBONATE
IN OTHER WORDS, IT'S JUST A CHEAP STIMULANT
WHAT'S INSIDE THE DRUG?

BUT THERE'S SOMETHING STRANGE INSIDE IT AS WELL
WHAT ARE THESE PRICKLY LOOKING THINGS?
THEY'RE THORNS THERE'S NOTHING SPECIAL ABOUT THEM.
I ALSO TOOK ONE FROM THE PACKAGE AND FOUND THE SAME THING IN IT
HERE'S A CLOSE-UP OF THE THORNS.
OTHER THAN THAT, THERE'S NOTHING UNUSUAL ABOUT THEM
WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH THE SHIKIGAMI?
...
"OSHIRA"—?

WHAT KIND OF OLD MAN?
WHAT DID YOU SAY?
I RAN INTO THIS OLD GUY IN THE AFTERNOON
AND HE SAID THAT THESE CAPSULES WERE CALLED THAT... I THOUGHT HE WAS NUTS!
...THIS WHOLE THING IS FULL OF SECRETS
NIMIYA WAS THE FIRST TO NOTICE THESE STRANGE THINGS BUT SHE DOESN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT WHY THESE THINGS ARE HAPPENING
SHE DOESN'T EVEN KNOW WHERE HER OWN POWERS COME FROM.
I FIND IT ALL HARD TO BELIEVE...

I DON'T KNOW
I CAN'T EXACTLY SAY IT'S BECAUSE OF THE VISIONS
ERM
WELL
EH?
WHY DO YOU BELIEVE HER?
I'VE ALWAYS LIVED A
LIFE WITH MY GRAND-FATHER,
AT LEAST UNTIL THE MESSAGE CAME LAST MONTH
THE ONE THAT WENT "FIND THE DOLL MAKER, AND TAKE THE DOLL"?
GRANDPA USED TO STUDY RELI-GION AND SUPERSTI-TIONS,
AND I NEVER QUITE KNEW WHAT HE WAS MUT-TERING ABOUT

ON THE NIGHT THAT THE MESSAGE CAME
GRANDPA WAS KILLED BY "THE THING THAT CANNOT BE SEEN."
I GUESS YOUR GRANDFATHER KNEW WHAT WAS GOING ON.
DIDN'T HE LEAVE YOU ANY CLUES?
NOPE. GRANDPA'S BODY AND HIS HOUSE WERE COMPLETELY DESTROYED.
THAT'S RIGHT.
YOU MEAN THAT THING FROM BEFORE?
THEN MY POWER WAS JUST UNLEASHED LIKE A RAGING FIRE
EVEN NOW I'M NOT TOO SURE WHAT IT'S ABOUT.
BEFORE HE DIED GRANDPA TOLD ME TO FOLLOW THE MESSAGE AND GO TO SHINJUKU
HE SAID THAT MY POWER WOULD BE OF USE HERE.

WHAT'S THAT?
DOLLS... THE PUPPET MASTER. THINGS THAT CANNOT BE SEEN...
IT'S JUST LIKE A KAREIHI
A KAREIHI IS A KIND OF PUPPET SHOW IN TAIWAN
ACCORDING TO LEGEND A KAREIHI WAS ORIGINALLY PERFORMED TO EXORCISE EVIL.
ONLY PRIESTS WERE ALLOWED TO OPERATE THE PUPPETS OR THE EVIL SPIRITS WOULD DESTROY THE PUPPETEER.
PUP-PETS...?
THOSE TWO SHIKI-GAMI FROM BEFORE WERE ACTING WEIRD...
...MOST S IF THEY DIDN'T WANT TO ATTACK US.
IT SEEMED LIKE THEY WERE WATCHING YOU TWO

DIDN'T IT?
I WAS THERE TOO BUT THEY DIDN'T PAY ANY ATTENTION TO ME
I THINK THEY HAD AN ULTERIOR MOTIVE
YEAH, MAYBE. THEY MUST HAVE BEEN SURPRISED TO MEET PEOPLE LIKE NIMIYA AND I
WE'RE A THREAT TO THEM
THEY'VE GOT TO BE ESPECIALLY AFRAID NIMIYA WILL DESTROY THEIR NETWORK.
THE SHIKIGAMI'S NETWORK?
I DOUBT THEY'RE SPREADING THE DRUG AND INCREASING THEIR NUMBERS WITHOUT A REASON
THERE ARE TONS OF THEM THROUGHOUT THE POPULATION NOW!
...SO

YOU'RE GOING TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT?
BUT THEN AGAIN...
I GUESS YOU COULDN'T PULL OUT EVEN IF YOU WANTED TO.
IT'S NOT LIKE I CAN PRETEND I DON'T SEE THOSE THINGS.
WELL... IF I DO SOMETHING, I'M AFRAID THOSE SHIKIGAMI WILL COME KNOCKING ON MY DOOR...
BUT I DON'T WANT A WHOLE GROUP OF PATIENTS AT MY DOOR EITHER, PREVENTING ME FROM DOING MY BUSINESS...
SO SINCE I HAVE A WAY TO DEAL WITH THEM RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME...
I'LL JUST SIT BACK AND WATCH THE SHOW!!
HOW ABOUT YOU?
HOW WILL YOU HANDLE THAT THAI GUY LIAM AND HIS CAPSULES?

I'M JUST BEING HONEST.
SO YOUR CURIOSITY WON OUT.
THE SHIKI-GAMI THAT RESIDE WITHIN PEOPLE.
THE DOLL MAKER THAT THE SHIKI-GAMI ARE SEEKING.
THE PUP-PETS THE DOLL MAKER CREATED.
AND THE PUPPET MASTER WHO CON-TROLS THE PUPPETS.
I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THEY'RE PLAYING AT.
THAT'S WHY.

BUT A GREAT SHOW IS ABOUT TO BEGIN.
SO LET'S JUST WAIT AND SEE WHAT CARDS WE GET!
HMPH... I SEE...
AND HERE I THOUGHT THAT THAT GUY WAS THE LAST PUPPET MASTER—
SO THERE'RE STILL PUPPET MASTERS AROUND?

WE CAN'T LET THE PUPPET MASTER GET THE DOLL!
AND BE CAREFUL OF THE GUY THAT CAN SEE SHIKIGAMI.
DON'T WORRY!
WELL DONE COME WITH ME!
OUR PREPARATIONS ARE ALMOST COMPLETE ANYWAY.
AS LONG AS IT'S FOR THE DOLL MAKER...
I'M SURE THE ELDERS AT GORYOUKA WON'T COMPLAIN!

CONTINUED IN VOLUME TWO

★この作品はフィクションです。実在の人物、団体、事件などとは一切関係ありません。

この本をお読みになって、どんな感想をお持ちになりましたか。ご感想、ご意見などを左記あてにお寄せください。

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傀儡 ①

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振り向けばしあわせ

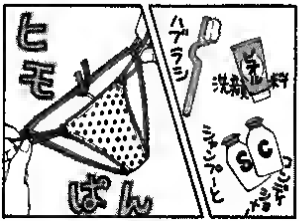
Look back in "HAPPINESS"

さく 高橋 明

■流されやすい男■

■その後 断っても強引に■

■コミュニケーションしたかったの■



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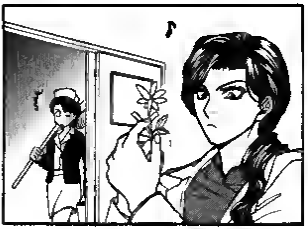

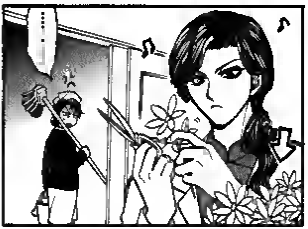

■そこはかとなく■